

UJIA Department of Informal Education Munich

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Aims:

- To educate about the context of the Munich Olympics
- To educate about the terrorist attack in Munich and its' aftermath
- Use Jewish texts to think about issues around retaliation
- Discuss the measures Israel took and our feelings towards the attacks

Length – 1hr30mins

Contextualisation of Munich Olympics (20 minutes)

The peula (activity) should start with the framing of the games so should begin with an overview of [world events that happened in 1972](#) (not including the Munich Olympics) to give the participants an idea of what the world was like 39 years ago. Then go on to explain that the 1972 Munich Olympics was Germany's opportunity to show the world that it was in a very different place compared with the 1936 'Nazi Olympics'.

There are various different methods for addressing this depending on the age group but here are some examples of methods to juxtapose the 2 summer games in Germany with each other:

- Do a presentation
- Split the group into 2. Give each a brief (one is Berlin '36 and one is Munich '72) and get each to make a presentation/exhibition/TV advert to show the contrast between the two games.
- Make a quiz or Trivial Pursuit style board game.

Below are three possible areas of contrast and links to external resources for content:

Difference in posters and pictures from the games

The two men that produced the publicity (Joseph Goebbels) and (Otto Aicher) for each Jewish Involvement ('36 – Jews Banned) ('72 – Spitz, largest individual gold haul until 2008)

Posters and pictures:

1936

[Torch Lighting](#)

[Official Poster 1](#)

[Official Poster 2](#)

[Passbooks and Memorabilia](#)

[Gold Medal](#)

[Pin Badges](#)

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Glasgow/Leeds/Liverpool/London/Manchester

1972

[Munich Posters, Fliers and Merchandise.](#)

Publicity:

1936

[Joseph Goebbels](#). For more information click [here](#) and scroll down to 'The Propaganda Games' section

1972

[Otl Aicher](#). For more information, click [here](#).

Jewish Involvement:

1936

<http://www.historyplace.com/worldwar2/triumph/tr-olympics.htm>

1972

Jewish Medal Table:

1972 - Sapporo/Munich			
Mark Spitz, USA, swimming	7		
Valentin Mankin, USSR, yachting	1		
Faina Melnik, USSR, track	1		
Neal Shapiro, USA, equestrianism		1	
Ildiko Sagine-Rejto, Hungary, fencing		1	
Mark Rakita, USSR, fencing		1	
Eduoard Vinokurov, USSR, fencing		1	
Andrea Gyarmati, Hungary, swimming		1	
Neal Shapiro, USA, equestrianism			1
Grigory Kriss, USSR, fencing			1
Andrea Gyarmati, Hungary, swimming			1
Irena Kirszenstein-Szewinska, Poland, track			1
Donald Cohan, USA, yachting			1
Peter Asch, USA, water polo			1

http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud_0002_0015_0_15093.html

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Information on [Mark Spitz](#) (Jewish swimmer who won 7 gold medals in Munich)

Munich Massacre (20 minutes)

After you have set the scene of the Munich games, present the events which led up to 11 members of the Israel team being murdered.

Due to the sensitive nature of the subject matter, it may be beneficial to use existing well documented records and video footage.

Some methods for putting across the information:

- Ask the group to look through different information and create a timeline of events
- Split up groups into 'newspapers' and ask them to write reports of the events

Below is a list of resources that can assist you with this section of the activity.

Footage:

[One day in September](#)

[ABC Munich 1972 coverage](#)

[You Tube - 1972 Munich Olympics Massacre of Israeli Athletes](#)

Text:

[BBC](#)

[Wikipedia](#)

[Jewish Virtual Library](#)

Israeli Response to the Massacre (20mins)

After all the information has been presented, a conversation should be facilitated with the participants along the following lines:

- How do you feel about the attacks?
- Do you think the commemoration was appropriate?
- How do you think the Israelis responded?

After you have facilitated the discussion, information should be given about the Israeli Response:

[Wikipedia](#)

[Militaryphotos.net](#)

[Munich \(2005 Film\)](#)

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Jewish Texts on Military Action (20mins)

Below are 2 different Jewish sources on the topic of retaliation to attacks. In this section the texts should be studied either as a whole group or in smaller groups with some guiding questions relevant to the reaction the Israeli government undertook after the Munich assassination.

- **Rodef – rodef** ([Hebrew](#) רודף, lit. "pursuer"; pl. רודפים, *rodefim*), in traditional [Jewish law](#), is one who is "pursuing" another to murder him or her. According to Jewish law, such a person must be killed by any bystander after being warned to stop and refusing. The source for this law is the [Tractate Sanhedrin](#) in the [Babylonian Talmud](#), page 73a. Assuming that the Munich killers were willing to kill again their pre-emptive removal from this world is justified in Jewish law

- Shulchan Aruch – Halacha 426 Paragraph 1

The Halacha states that if you see your neighbour drown in the sea, being attacked by animals or bandits and you are in a position to save him or employ someone else to save him you have an obligation to do so. The Halacha then directs you to the passage in the Torah – “Do not stand idly by while your neighbor’s blood is shed” ([Vayikra](#) 19:16).

Tzemach Tzedek an 18th Century Halachic authority, comments on this Halacha and wonders if there is a financial limit to “not standing idly by” or is one required to commit all the money one can get to save a life. He then applies this question to the public funding of “Avengers” a group of sheriffs who seek out murderers and liquidate them

Surprisingly he assumes that the law of the ‘avenger’ still applies in modern times. He develops the idea into a modern context. To ensure that poor people are as well protected as the rich he argues that the deterrent of appointing ‘avengers’ is a communal responsibility to be funded from the pockets of the wealthy members of the community.

“Communities should club together until ‘the broken fence is mended’. If *haas veshalom* we don’t avenge death, *the blood of our brethren would be considered valueless*. And this was our custom many times and what we used to do was that the wealthiest of the generation would appoint ‘avengers’ to chase murderers. And even if on occasion we knew we couldn’t actualise the revenge of murder we would still appoint ‘avengers’ to chase after the murderers so it should be well known that the blood of our brethren is not considered valueless.”

Thus the responsibility to avenge Jewish death is a communal responsibility and from this view the actions post-Munich to kill the perpetrators is well justified

Guided questions

We have had a look at Jewish sources looking at pre-emptive and retaliatory killing. How do we feel about these sources?

Having learnt about Munich, which of the texts do you think is the most relevant?

Where is the line between retaliation for spilling Jewish blood and that retaliation leading to more blood being spilt? Is this something that should be considered before retaliating?

Was Israel correct to respond in the way that it did?

Sikkum (10mins)

Wrap up the session by going over the main points of the peula and ask each person to share one thing they learnt during the session.